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Contact: Gina Paige or Jamie Keehn, 608-422-7800 or dcfmedia@wisconsin.gov

Applications Open for Dream Up! Grants

DCF to offer another \$2.5 million to bolster child care in communities across Wisconsin

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) opened applications today for a third cohort of Dream Up! grants. This round of applications will offer \$2.5 million in funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the opportunity for nine Wisconsin communities to evaluate, plan, sustain, and expand child care in their area.

“Seeing communities from the first two cohorts of the Dream Up! grant come together to support child care at the local level has been exciting,” said DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson. “This third round of funding will allow for even more areas of Wisconsin to do the same, boosting the workforce, and therefore the economy in their communities.”

Grant applications will remain open until March 17, 2023. All applications must include a cross-sector Core Team – individuals and businesses cannot apply as the sole applicant. Additionally, communities that previously applied and were not awarded a Dream Up! grant can apply during this time.

The first [two cohorts](#) of the Dream Up! grant program were announced in the spring of 2022. Cohorts 1 and 2 provided \$7.9 million in funding to 28 communities. These communities have since begun the strategic planning process with our grant administrators, First Children’s Finance (FCF).

Communities from Cohort 1 have completed their core team meetings and are finalizing their child care supply-building plans, including goals, action items, and budgets. Several communities are pursuing or have secured additional financial resources in addition to the \$75,000 Dream Up! community award. Activities include:

- Planning community/employer surveys and events to learn more about local child care needs.
- Building the child care workforce to re-open classrooms that are closed due to lack of staffing.
- Engaging high school students in course work to become providers.
- Supporting family (in-home) providers in enhancing and growing their programs.
- Preparing to open new child care centers through strategic community partnerships.
- Identifying potential resources and asking for support from state and local leaders.

Applications and details for Cohort 3 can be found on the [Dream Up! webpage](#).

To learn more about DCF, visit www.dcf.wisconsin.gov and follow @WisDCF on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).